

First Name: James
Last Name: Lussier
Email Address: jlussier@bendbroadband.com
City of Residence: Bend
Support SB 868-871

Testimony:

Good afternoon, my name is James T. Lussier and I have lived in Oregon since 1958 and Bend since 1970. My Profession has been in Healthcare as a caregiver in the St. Charles Health System and as their President/CEO for 15 years. There are lots of parallels between what healthcare is doing and the issues of managing homes and the environment. Healthcare has the capability to treat all the needs of poor patients, but is vastly more efficient if we stress prevention for the patient and their families----exercise, best healthcare practices and asking others to design safety in their products----seatbelts, training in schools and prevention.

We can do the same in managing the effects of climate change. For example, in our region in Central Oregon, use of water, preparing to reduce wild fires and education of visitors in both summer and winter is much more valuable than dealing with injury and the result of environmental catastrophes.

For example when it comes to where we live, Oregonians deserve access to affordable and safe housing that can withstand the worsening effects of climate change. Homes and buildings are the first lines of defense for threats like wildfire smoke and extreme heat. Burning methane in our homes and buildings is bad for our health, the environment, and our bank accounts. We must begin the transition away from using natural gasses in our homes and increase climate resilience. This can be done by installing sturdier windows and doors, adding layers of insulation, and transitioning to clean electricity.

And if we must think selfishly, think of your own health and the health of your children. Children in homes with gas stoves have a 42% increased risk of asthma symptoms. Burning methane gas inside homes can do similar damage to our health as second hand smoke. Think of your own wallets and how Northwest natural gas has raised rates 40% in the past 13 months while the cost of renewable energy sources like solar and wind are falling. We need to stop adding to the problem and start implementing solutions. All new buildings in Oregon should be built smart from the start with electric heat pumps that are both more affordable to build and more affordable for those living in the homes. Heat pumps are growing rapidly in popularity and availability because they cost less to use without heating up the planet.

Thus, the parallels between how and where we live, our management of a changing environment and the benefits all of us wants from healthcare all have the same value-----a better life for us all. Thank you for your service.